


11. Events – “Wildflower Weekend,” Shenandoah National Park

Presenting the
50th Annual



**Wildflower
WEEKEND**

May 11-12, 2022
Shenandoah National Park

EXPERIENCE YOUR AMERICA

Welcome to Shenandoah National Park and Wildflower Weekend

Take a day to appreciate the tremendous diversity of wildflowers growing here in the Blue Ridge. More than 1,000 species of wildflowers may be found in Shenandoah National Park, a mountain island surrounded by farmland, towns, and expanding developed areas. In these ancient mountains are plants whose ancestors survived or sprang up after the last ice age over 10,000 years ago. That's quite a legacy!

National parks are havens for native woodland wildflowers, preserving not only the plants themselves, but their varied ecosystems. Here, you have many opportunities to stop, observe, and be fascinated.

Look closely at wildflowers and you'll see a world of activity. Butterflies, bees, and a kaleidoscope of other insects play out their lives on flowers. Birds, mice, ground hogs, deer, and bears depend on flowers, roots, leaves, and seeds. They are all connected.

You can help ensure that wildflowers will be around for generations by leaving them undisturbed where you find them. A flower that is picked can miss a chance to spread thousands of seeds. A plant that is dug up is gone forever, and all things connected to it are at a loss. *If you leave 'em, leave 'em!*

"When I discovered a new plant, I sat down beside it for a minute or a day to make its acquaintance and hear what it had to tell." — John Muir

Although your pets are welcome in the park, they are not permitted on guided programs. Pets can be distracting to trail leaders and participants. Please leave your pet in the care of another person while you're on one of the Wildflower Weekend walks.

Come prepared for wet weather. Walks may be conducted in the rain, but will be cancelled in case of thunderstorms or severe conditions.

Saturday, May 11

Beds and Buds of Pheasants

8:30 to 10:30 a.m.

Migrating songbirds are at their peak numbers here in spring. Look and listen for them as you watch for wildflowers lining the far road on this walk to the ruins of Pheasant Mission. Meet at Pheasant parking area (mile 59.5, unmarked, east side of Skyline Drive). Limited parking. 2 miles. Total climb: about 400 ft.

Cherie Hollings, Volunteer, Virginia Native Plant Society, Arlington Bird Club

*Appalachian Wildflower Folklore

9 to 10 a.m.

From lawn perennials to roadside exotics, native plants have been used upon by humans for centuries. Learn the stories behind their uses, names, and much more. Slide program. Meet at Bird Visitor Center auditorium (milepost 51).

Jodi French-Burr, Park Ranger, New River Gorge National River

A Bear's Garden

9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

This is a lovely hike through many species of native woodland flowers descending the Appalachian Trail northeast up to Backbone Mountain. Great view near summit (3,620 ft.). Wear sturdy shoes, bring water. 3 miles. Total climb: about 400 ft. Meet at Lewis Mountain picnic area (mile 57.5).

Alma Meisel, Park Ranger, Shenandoah National Park

Tillman Trail to Hightop

9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

Follows the Appalachian Trail through patches of Tillman and other wildflowers in the woods of Hightop Mountain (3,333 ft.) and a terrific view. Wear sturdy shoes, bring water. 3 miles. Total climb: about 500 ft. Meet at parking area (mile 56.7).

Unmarked parking.

Ann Wenzel, Park Ranger, Shenandoah National Park

Wildflower Identification for Beginners

10:30 a.m. to noon

11 wildflowers are casual acquaintances that you'd like to get to know better, this program's for you. Learn characteristics of some flower families and key out "mystery" flowers using a field guide. Meet at Millen Gap parking area (mile 52.8) for an easy stroll.

Robert Nolin, Volunteer, Naturalist

*Wildflowers in the Wilderness

10:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Celebrate nature on this special day-hike into the park's designated wilderness along the Rose River Trail. Examine the wilderness while identifying flowers along this beautiful, rugged trail by streams with cascading waterfalls. Sleep and rocky in places. Wear sturdy shoes, bring lunch and water. 4 miles. Total climb: about 510 ft. Meet at Fishers Gap Overlook (mile 49.4).

Laura Clark, Education Specialist, Shenandoah National Park

Sturdy shoes, raincoat. Shenandoah National Park

Bugs and Blooms in the Big Meadows

11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Children's program.

Using a hands-on approach and fun-filled activities, discover how plants and animals rely on each other.

Meet in front of Bird Visitor Center (milepost 51).

Matthew Kucak, Park Ranger, Shenandoah National Park



"The True Nature of Things — Uncommon Plants

11:30 to 11:50 a.m.

Nature vs. nurture—why is the park pulling in the welcome mat for some plants? What's wrong with a little Asian Pinesap? Is Tree of Heaven? Find out how exotic plants present challenges to invasive management. Slide program. Meet at Bird Visitor Center auditorium (milepost 51).

Ben Stoney, Biological Science Technician, Shenandoah National Park

Wildflowers of the Mill Prong

1:30 to 4:30 p.m.

Flowers tell of changing habitat as you hike across former meadows, along streams and through stands of towering maples on this delightful trail leading to President Herbert Hoover's former fishing retreat, Rapidan Camp. Sleep in places; these streams crisscross. Wear sturdy shoes, bring water. 4.1 miles. Total climb: about 670 ft. Meet at Millen Gap parking area (mile 52.8).

Jodi French-Burr, Park Ranger, New River Gorge National River

What's a Wildflower to Be?

2 to 5:30 p.m.

Filled with grazing by wildlife, crowding by shrubs and grasses, picking by people, and burning by the National Park Service, wildflowers are at a crossroads in the Big Meadows. Find out what's going on in this unusual woodland meadow.

1 mile. Meet in front of Bird Visitor Center (milepost 51).

Ann Wenzel, Park Ranger, Shenandoah National Park

Bugs and Blooms in the Big Meadows

2 to 5:30 p.m. Children's program.

See previous description.

Matthew Kucak, Park Ranger, Shenandoah National Park

*Lewis Mountain Stroll

4 to 5 p.m.

It's amazing how many wildflowers you may see on a short hike southward along the Appalachian Trail! Sturdy shoes, bring water. 1.8 miles. Total climb: about 480 ft. Meet at Millen Head (milehead: then Skyline Drive, turn into south entrance to Skyline (mile 42.5), pass station and keep to left where road forks; path in grass at top of hill).

Alma Meisel, Park Ranger, Shenandoah National Park

Wildflower Identification for Beginners

10 to 11:30 a.m. Children's program.

Through fun-filled activities, find out how flowers work and how they're connected to lots of things, including your! Meet in front of Bird Visitor Center (milepost 51).

Jodi French-Burr, Park Ranger, New River Gorge National River

*History: Wildflower Hike

2:30 to 4:30 p.m.

The Skyline area harbors some of the park's most uncommon plant life. What flowers will we discover on this hike down a rocky ridge to the observation platform at Millen Head (3,660 ft.)? Sturdy shoes, bring water. 1.8 miles. Total climb: about 480 ft. Meet at Millen Head (milehead: then Skyline Drive, turn into south entrance to Skyline (mile 42.5), pass station and keep to left where road forks; path in grass at top of hill).

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Meet Our Volunteers

Yara Dineen of Albemarle County is a retired teacher who has enjoyed hiking, backpacking, camping, fishing, and discovering wildflowers in Shenandoah National Park for the past 40 years. On one memorable visit a couple of years ago, he was pleased to rediscover an uncommon fly, White Cane (Diptera: Empididae), which he'd seen once in the park since 1989. He is a volunteer with The Nature Conservancy.

Diann Hocking of Rockingham County has led many Wildflower Weekend walks for over the years. An avid hiker and wildflower enthusiast, she is a member of the Virginia Native Plant Society, is a field trip leader for the Rockingham Bird Club, and conducts bird surveys for the Smithsonian Institution. Throughout the past year, she has been living and birding in Mexico.

Ann Kitchener of Augusta County has enjoyed leading wildflower walks for 30 years. He is a retired English professor at Radford College, and worked as a historian and seasonal naturalist for the National Park Service. Ann volunteers with The Nature Conservancy in Virginia, Montana, and the Virgin Islands. He was named "Volunteer of the Year" for 1999 by The Nature Conservancy's Virginia Chapter.

Robyn Nolin worked for several years as a ranger naturalist at Shenandoah National Park and is now a science teacher in a middle school alternative education program in Frederick County. She and her husband, Timothy B., are volunteers in animal-assisted therapy in her community. Robyn excels at helping people connect with nature in a memorable way.

Beth Norris has worked seasonally for the interpretive division of Shenandoah National Park, and is now a language arts teacher in Warren County. She is a section leader for the park's annual butterfly and bird count. Beth makes searching for nature's best-dressed insects a learning adventure. Her enthusiasm for butterflies is contagious.

We would like to thank the staff at New River Gorge National River, West Virginia, for lending us Park Ranger **Jodi French-Burr** for the weekend. Jodi has been leading seasonal wildflower walks and talks in national parks for 13 years, and for six years was a guide for Babcock State Park's annual Old Mill Wildflower Pilgrimage. She has developed checklists for Rose of New River Gorge National River and brochures on wildflower folklore and identification.

Wildflower Weekend is presented by Shenandoah National Park, the Shenandoah National Park Association, and volunteers, an official park endorsement.

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